

Application No. 09/729,573
Amendment "A" dated June 1, 2004
Reply to Office Action mailed March 26, 2004

REMARKS

The first Office Action, mailed March 26, 2004, considered and rejected claims 1-24 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Godefroid (U.S. Patent No. 6,697,840).

Applicants respectfully submit, however, that Godefroid does not qualify as prior art with regard to the present application. In particular, Godefroid was not filed "before the invention by the applicant" (U.S.C. § 102(e)) and does not have an earlier priority date. Instead, Godefroid has the same priority date as the present application, as reflected by the following.

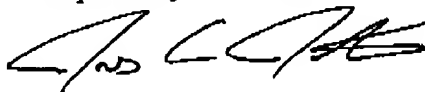
Godefroid was filed on Feb. 29, 2000, with no priority claim to an earlier filed application. The present application, however, while filed on December 4, 2000, claims priority back to Feb. 29, 2000 through a provisional application (serial no. 60/186,225) which was properly incorporated by reference in the present application, and which supports the subject matter claimed by the present application.

Accordingly, inasmuch as Godefroid was the only reference used to reject the claims in the last action, the disqualification of Godefroid as prior art should now place the claims in condition for prompt allowance.

In the event that the Examiner finds remaining impediment to a prompt allowance of this application that may be clarified through a telephone interview, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned attorney.

Dated this 1 day of June 2004.

Respectfully submitted,



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